



The MESSAGE

Southwestern Indiana's Catholic
Community Newspaper

March 14, 2025

Volume 55, Number 26

www.evdiomessage.org

Diocese sees increase in Catechumens, Candidates

By JOHN ROHLF
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Bishop Joseph M. Siegel celebrated the Rite of Election of Catechumens and Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion March 9 at St. Benedict Cathedral in Evansville.

Parishes from across the Diocese of Evansville presented their catechumens and candidates. The sponsors joined the catechumens and candidates during the presentation. Bishop Siegel received the catechumens first and then the candidates, who were presented by representatives of their parishes.

This year, the diocese has 126 candidates and 115 catechumens. The 241 combined candidates and catechumens is an increase of 71 over last year, when the diocese had 84 candidates and 86 catechumens.

During the Easter Vigil, catechumens will be baptized, confirmed and receive the Eucharist. Candidates are those who will be confirmed and receive the Eucharist.

During his homily, Bishop Siegel said it was a great joy to welcome all those in attendance to St. Benedict Cathedral, the mother church of the diocese, which spans 12 counties and has 45 parishes. He especially greeted the catechumens and candidates, who were recommended and sent to the celebration by their parishes, that they may begin their final preparation for the reception of the sacraments

of Christian Initiation.

He said this Rite marks a significant moment in their journey of faith. God has implanted his call deep within the hearts of the catechumens and candidates, and they responded yes to the marvelous power of God's love. He said their priests, catechists, godparents, sponsors and guides in the Order of Christian Initiation of Adults process recognized in them a deepening conversion to the message of Jesus Christ.

Bishop Siegel said all Catholics set out on a Lenten journey March 5 on Ash Wednesday, which culminates in the sacred Triduum of the Lord's passion, death and resurrection. These 40 days are a precious opportunity to look deep within and discern areas where sin and darkness still lurk and where there is a need for conversion, he said.

For catechumens and candidates, Lent is a time of more intense spiritual preparation, Bishop Siegel said. It is a time of interior reflection intended to purify hearts and minds to prepare for the grace of the sacraments. He said in their parishes during the Lenten season, the elect will participate in the Scrutinies and the candidates will participate in the Penitential Rite. These are meant to uncover and then help to heal all that is weak; and to bring out and then help to strengthen all that is upright and good. Lent is the



The Message photo by John Rohlif
Bishop Joseph M. Siegel greets catechumens and their godparents during the Rite of Election of Catechumens and Calling the Candidates to Continuing Conversion March 9 at St. Benedict Cathedral.

time to deepen resolve, hold fast to Christ and carry out their decision and the Church's challenge to them to love God above all, Bishop Siegel said.

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Alternatives to burial, cremation pose serious concerns for Church

By Victoria Arthur
Statehouse Correspondent for
Indiana's Catholic Newspapers

In this Lenten season that encourages reflection on mortality and the eternal, the Indiana Catholic Conference (ICC) is voicing concerns about newer meth-



ods of disposition of human remains that the Church contends do not demonstrate proper dignity or respect.

Two bills introduced at the Statehouse this legislative session propose alkaline hydrolysis — commonly known as "water cremation" — and human composting as alternatives to burial and traditional cremation. Both stand in opposition to Catholic Church teaching on the dignity of the human body and the hope of the resurrection.

"The Church teaches that we are a unity of body and soul, and we believe in the resurrection of the body," said Alexander Mingus, ICC executive director, the public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Indiana. "Therefore, we place importance on how we treat the human body, influenced by our Church's teaching on the dignity of the human person.

"I hope that in this Lenten season, we can all reflect on some important questions: Who are we made for? What is our final resting place? What is our ultimate destiny? How we treat our body in this life has implications for the next."

Early in the legislative session, the ICC had concerns about House Bill 1609, which sought to legalize disposition of human remains by composting. The measure never received a hearing.

But another alternative to traditional

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Diocese holds second annual spelling bee

By JOHN ROHLF
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For the second consecutive year, the Diocese of Evansville Catholic Schools Office hosted a pair of diocesan spelling bees.

Students at schools throughout the diocese participated in two separate spelling bees March 4 at the Diocese of Evansville Catholic Center. The elementary spelling bee was for students in grades five or below. The middle school spelling bee was for students in grades 6-8.

"I would like to thank our parents, teachers and administrators for their support in preparing our students for the Diocesan Spelling Bee," Diocesan Associate Superintendent Kari Ford said. "This event not only celebrates their hard work, but it also provides a wonderful opportunity for our schools to connect. We are blessed to share this opportunity with our schools as we invite their students to participate and share their God given talents."

Earlier in the year, the diocesan schools hosted school-wide spelling bees to determine who each school would send to the diocesan spelling bee.



The Message photo by John Rohlif
Posey County's St. Philip School student Rhea Singh, right, placed first in the middle school diocesan spelling bee. Evansville's Corpus Christi student Andrew Ulrich, left, finished as the runner-up in the competition.

In the elementary spelling bee, Nash Childress from St. Joseph School in Princeton placed first and Khloe Sickman from St. Benedict Cathedral School in Evansville finished as the runner-up. In the middle school spelling bee, Rhea Singh from St. Philip School in Posey County placed first. Andrew Ulrich from Corpus Christi School in Evansville finished as the runner-up.

Flaget Principal Samantha McClure was the pronouncer for the elementary spelling bee and St. John the Baptist Principal Elizabeth Flatt was the pronouncer for the middle school spelling bee. Diocesan principals served as

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